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THE  
SYSTEM  
A  
POEM  
IN FIVE BOOKS

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By the Rev. JOSEPH WISE.

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Τὸ κάλλιον ἐπιπραξί' ἀν' ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ; ἢ τοῖς τι ἀνθρώποις μέγα ὄφελος γράψαι,  
καὶ τὴν φύσιν εἰς φῶς τοῖς πᾶσι προσαγαλῖν. PLATO. *Epist.* 7.

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THE

SYSTEM

OF

TELETYPE



BY MR. JOSEPH WISE.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE design of this work is to exhibit the true system of nature and providence, to elucidate the principal doctrines of physics, metaphysics, ethics, and theology. In each of these sciences it contains several new and interesting observations; as well as places ancient and received truths in a clear light. Nature and revelation appear to illustrate each other; and atheism and infidelity to be totally irrational.*

*It was necessary to begin this work with the metaphysical disquisitions contained in the first book and part of the second: these are very unmanageable in poetry; especially when treated so particularly, as here is done for the sake of comprehension and perspicuity: this book is therefore but an unfavourable specimen: yet it is printed as such, because it is the first and much the smallest, being scarcely equal to a fourth of any of the books succeeding.*

12+

THE







[ : ]

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T H E  
S Y S T E M.

---

B O O K I.

---

**C**REATION's scenes while, pensive, I survey,  
Where sot and sage with vague opinion stray ;  
While, through the gloom, attentively I try  
To ken the truth with pure discerning eye ;  
(Studious to fill my function as I ought ;  
Inform'd to teach, as candid to be taught ;  
And, for God's glory and man's good, make known  
The truth emerging, as expands the dawn ;)  
And, while it rises, rises on my sight,  
'Till the deep plan discloses fairly right ;  
Just as the scenes in grand accord appear,  
Methinks a sceptic thus accosts mine ear :

“ PREACHER profess — of God, his works and laws, —  
“ I call thee to assert thy Master's cause.  
“ His minister anointed if thou art,  
“ This task is thy inviolable part :  
“ Come on ; disclose what overshadow'd lies ;  
“ Prove him all-good, almighty and all-wise.

B

“ This

" This conscious being probably must be  
 " Through endless scenes of bliss or misery.  
 " Suppose it comes from God, suppose from Fate;  
 " God hardly will, Fate can't, annihilate.  
 " My boding bosom, anxious, pants to know  
 " What is the cause of happiness and woe; (1)\*  
 " To know, if all we hope and fear depend  
 " On God or Fate, on enemy or friend.  
 " The sov'reign cause I gladly would allow  
 " All-wise, almighty and all-good; but how?  
 " See human nature warp'd with bias, prone  
 " To break those laws, which all as sacred own: (2)  
 " See all degrees of life oppress'd with pain:  
 " Divine perfections infinite how vain!"

ALAS! shall man, so feeble and so blind,  
 Without heav'n's aid, presume the truth to find?  
 The King of glory once unveil his light,  
 Illusion flies; we see that all is right.  
 When, by his light, appears how evil rose  
 From sin, the nat'ral principle of woes;  
 How God, forgiving, labours to replace  
 What we pervert; (stupendous in his grace!)  
 All his grand counsels to reform address'd;  
 (For man must first be righteous to be blest'd:) (3)  
 Dubious unhallow'd thoughts perplex no more,  
 Prostrate we fall, with awe and joy adore.

GOD made this universe entire in all  
 Virtue and bliss; but liable to fall.  
 Life he bestow'd, with liberty endu'd;  
 And built on virtue universal good:  
 Because probation he did most intend  
 To serve his glory, as the sov'reign end.  
 The perfect sanction virtuously maintain'd,  
 Bliss, free from woe, eternally had reign'd: § But

\* The figures inserted in the course of the poem refer to the notes at the end, which have corresponding numbers prefixed.

§ Gen. i. — Wild. Sol. i. — Rom. v. 12, — 1 Cor. xv. 21.

But soon did sin that sanction overthrow,  
 Establish'd vice, and vice establish'd woe.  
 Sin is the origin, and sin alone,  
 Of all the evil in creation known.  
 Evil, O man, shall triumph o'er thy race,  
 'Till God redeem, extending sov'reign grace:  
 Grace he extends; and all, who well explore,  
 He will redeem to bliss for evermore.

SUCH is the plan in revelation's view;  
 Nature accords, and reason pleads it true.  
 It must be true, if what is fittest must;  
 If God be wise, omnipotent and just.

I. "No! (you reply) Can reason e'er admit  
 "The works of God could fall from order fit?  
 "God must the order he bestow'd maintain,  
 "Nor see his sacred purpose render'd vain:  
 "If God maintains the order he bestows,  
 "Then nature all is perfect as it rose.  
 "Evil, 'tis true, seems somewhat strange to join  
 "With full perfection, in a work divine:  
 "But evil must (some wits have understood)  
 "(Ev'n guilt and pain) exist for public good."

A witless paradox! On pain and guilt,  
 Negations of all good, must good be built?  
 Must orbs, to form a system, devious roll?  
 Must parts have faults to make a faultless whole?  
 Must the existence of a thing rely  
 On such a cause as must the thing destroy?  
 Must strife be harmony, and darkness light,  
 All contradiction true, all wrong be right?  
 Absurd past thought! Besides, creation's frame  
 Must not retain its order still the same:  
 Far more august the view: the total range  
 Must change in seasons, suiting morals' change.



'Tis fit it change, if free-born sons rebel,  
 'Till bliss of heav'n expire in woes of hell,  
 So justice bids, so wisdom must intend,  
 To serve God's glory, the most sacred end,  
 Blindness and mis'ry, weakness and decay,  
 Declare perfection now expir'd away. (4)  
 Reason concludes, if stedfast stood the plan  
 In pure perfection, pure as it began,  
 All would be happy in their full degree,  
 Since good the Cause, whose fiat made them be;  
 Since, too, a system, all in virtue blest,  
 Would beam the splendour of his glory best.  
 Just as, among the starry train of night,  
 The various orbs are all replete with light;  
 So, in perfection, bliss, through great and small,  
 In full proportion, would replenish all.  
 Could God produce creation as it is,  
 More vice than virtue, and more woe than bliss;  
 To say, he did, by absolute decree,  
 His creatures bind in sin and misery;  
 That is, constrain'd them to abuse his boon,  
 Deride his laws, and ev'n himself disown;  
 And rack'd them, faultless, with such dreadful pain,  
 That life, though short, but few would wish again:  
 Or, to say, evil must be understood,  
 As needful basis for the public good;  
 Is with presumption, scorning sense and dread,  
 To say just ought that fumes in folly's head.  
 Such thoughts their own absurdity express;  
 As reason, from its nature, must confess.  
 No sober soul, that dreads or scorns t'assert,  
 With impious tongue, what it denies at heart,  
 Can say, that nature's perfect as it ought:  
 Nature's imperfect, yet not God in fault:  
 God must be just: of course, from sin must flow,  
 By his eternal sentence, vice and woe.  
 What is, is right; all happy as they should;  
 Because God is, and they are not, all-good.

II. "BUT (you rejoin) evil, as some debate,  
 "Taints all created, by essential fate."  
 Absurd! — As if *created* did imply  
 Necessity of sin and misery.  
 Prove the assertion. — "Yes: the proof is clear:  
 "Flat demonstration strikes conviction here:  
 "Of systems possible, if 'tis confess'd,  
 "That wisdom infinite must form the best;  
 "What is, is best; and all that is must be;  
 "Evil with good, of strict necessity;  
 "If good exist, of consequence, must ill;  
 "Good universal is impossible."

CONCLUDED wrong. — It must be, too, confess'd,  
 In systems, will's essential to the best;  
 None, wholly fatal, can be best; no view,  
 Divinely splendid, could from such accrue.  
 Necessity of evil should things have,  
 Except what God, of sov'reign pleasure, gave;  
 Necessity of evil should he give,  
 Except for sin, which must his curse receive;  
 Then all existence, into evil brought,  
 Had better slept in everlasting nought.  
 To God what glory, to his works what gain,  
 From a creation bound in guilt (5) and pain?  
 Necessity of good should he bestow,  
 (Boon, which, alas! is not conferr'd below,)  
 Necessity of good would quite explode  
 Virtue in us, and holiness in God. (6)  
 These to explode must be confess'd unfit:  
 The system best, 'tis plain, must these admit,  
 That must be best, which best admits to be  
 The noblest pow'rs befitting each degree;  
 And which, of consequence, reflects the rays  
 Of God's own glory with divinest blaze.  
 If, therefore, holiness must be display'd  
 In the great Maker, virtue in the made,

Will

Will must be given ; and free must be its choice  
 To good or ill, to virtue or to vice : (7).  
 Then all necessity of good or ill  
 May spring from morals, use, abuse, of will.  
 Admit such will, then must be understood  
 A possibility of ill or good ;  
 And the existence, or of both or one,  
 Depend on will, depend on will alone.  
 On use of will, if God must blifs bestow,  
 He must distinguish its abuse with woe.  
 So will's abuse, without the help of fate,  
 Must the best system bring to bad estate.  
 Yet a free system, though deprav'd, must still  
 Claim to be best of systems possible.  
 Thus all is easy : what pretence can be  
 For charging evil on necessity ?

- “ OUT of eternal matter, some have said,  
 “ This fabric of the world in time was made :  
 “ Insist that matter, baffling God's controul,  
 “ Could not, excluding pain, unite with soul :  
 “ Essential then to union must be pain,  
 “ Which yet a part may for the whole sustain.  
 “ God therefore gave a bias to each soul,  
 “ That part might sin, and suffer justly for the whole.”

A BLASPHEMOUS chimæra ! How can part  
 Pain, if essential, from the whole avert ?  
 Pain, if essential, as such doctors say,  
 Must cling to all ; not God could rend away.  
 But grant he could ; yet pain how could he deal,  
 That sinners might, and only sinners, feel ?  
 If sinn'd too many, guilt must lose its due,  
 And probity be punish'd, if too few.  
 Again ; consider, when the world was made,  
 Where could the pain at first be justly laid ?  
 Who sinn'd before existence ? or, at first,  
 Were some unmeritedly made accurs'd ?

Unluckiest



• Unluckiest scheme that e'er presumption taught,  
 With contradiction, with profaneness, fraught!  
 A part, to hide God's failings with pretence,  
 Made free and weak to forfeit innocence!  
 Then holy God must sinful creatures need;  
 And, to seem just, be most unjust indeed!  
 Profane absurdity! — If for the rest  
 A part must suffer, those should be the best;  
 To hinder evil active as they could,  
 And blest in suff'ring for the public good.

PERSIST you yet, "God wisely bias'd will  
 " To save his credit, and to heighten ill:  
 " Without delinquency his design must fail;  
 " And good expire, if good too much prevail:  
 " All partial evil, rightly understood,  
 " O'errul'd by him, is universal good?"

PERSIST you may; but, sure, at large expence  
 Of all repute for wit and common-sense.  
 At such strange doctrine modest reason starts:  
 What! the whole perfect through defect in parts?  
 Good built on evil, happiness on pain?  
 Nay, cannot God without oppression reign?  
 Such impious shocking nonsense ne'er could rise,  
 Unless suggested by the fire of lies.  
 God, you confess, at pleasure, modell'd soul;  
 Why then did matter baffle his controul?  
 Could he not equally to good have wrought  
 Things of solidity as things of thought?  
 Nay, grant he could not; grant he fail'd to fit  
 Matter to soul; then why not soul to it?  
 If rigid matter some disorder gain,  
 Wherefore must soul in consequence feel pain?  
 Nay, grant it must; why then must union be?  
 Where lies the absolute necessity?  
 Resolve these queries wisely, if you can,  
 And vindicate the ways of God to man.

You

You cry, — “Such numbers God could not create  
 “ Perfectly blest, in systematic state.  
 “ In so large numbers part must be oppress’d  
 “ By mere subordination to the rest.”  
 Why then such numbers? Rather be a few  
 Completely happy. — “No: you trifle now  
 “ The more the better.” — Why? — “Why first, for this,  
 “ Increase of numbers is increase of bliss.”  
 Ye wits! on your hypothesis, ’tis plain,  
 Increase of numbers were increase of pain.  
 Blush, bigots, blush for your incongruous schemes!  
 Faithless in facts and credulous in dreams!  
 Who can believe the nonsense, you impart?  
 Nothing so weak, except a wicked heart!  
 Subordination! thence if evil springs,  
 Why oft’ are subjects happier than kings?  
 Brutes than mankind? Why oft’ may ev’n a flea,  
 In point of pleasure, cast contempt at thee?  
 Subordination, in or last or first,  
 Implies precisely neither blest nor curst:  
 It but implies that order in the frame,  
 Which makes a system’s nature, whence its name.

BUT, sad disaster! freedom why not spurn’d?  
 Admitting it, your scheme is self-o’vertur’d:  
 Admitting freedom, evil needs not fate  
 To be its source; it needs but only that  
 Its source is that, as sounds the voice divine;  
 Reason and nature in the chorus join.

2. A SCHEME is yours, devis’d with purpose fit;  
 At any rate, to baffle right with wrong:  
 Yet, strange mishap! your wisdom so profound  
 O’erlooks the best advantage of your ground.  
 Admit primordials, us’d in nature’s frame,  
 Are (what you not deny) in all the same;  
 ’Tis plain, in fact, God *could* bless great and small;  
 Once happy one, say, why not always all?

If from one part he evil can exclude,  
 He might from all, and bless the whole with good;  
 But (8) now (your crude hypothesis to mend,  
 Yet not, I hope, promote your impious end)  
 Let us suppose (what you will glad suppose) (9)  
 Primordials did exist without a cause;  
 Various in mode, in essence various, far  
 More than the kinds of compound beings are;  
 Some fit for forming bodies, some for minds,  
 As well all possible as real kinds:  
 Some capable of pleasure, some of pain:  
 And, rear'd in system, rank must rank sustain;  
 Nor could the pow'r of God in system fit,  
 But as their rigid natures would permit:  
 We own, did evil thus by fate result,  
 God could not hinder misery and guilt:  
 Mis'ry were then a necessary fault,  
 Since things could not be fitted as they ought:  
 Guilt were the offspring of an erring soul,  
 Free as God's self, coerc'd by no controul.  
 But surely such a creed, on no pretence,  
 Can man embrace, without renouncing sense.

Does aught, through all expansion known, imply  
 Such an invincible necessity?  
 In our ideas (which make all our thought,  
 Be they to objects adequate or not)  
 No shadow shews it, no minutest sign,  
 All's plainly arbitrary, all's design.

BUT lest we stumble on, for ever dark,  
 Be words defin'd, and things distinctly mark. (10)  
*Freedom* is that, by which an object *may*  
 Exist or act, or vary in its way:  
 And *fate* is that, by which an object *must*  
 Exist or act, and keep one tenor just.  
 Freedom's conceiv'd as single in its kind,  
 From something flows, thence *consequent* defin'd;



Freedom *to be* means only *possible* ;  
 Freedom *to act* lies in the pow'r of will.  
 Each, it is plain, does something pre-suppose,  
 Which may or may not be, from which it flows.  
 Fate in two kinds we properly conceive ;  
 This title *consequent*, that *positive*.  
*Positive fate* is so remote from *free*,  
 'Tis what we can't imagine *not to be*.  
 This kind of fate can ne'er be understood  
 In any substance ; no, not ev'n in God :  
 For we can think, whate'er we substance call  
 Might diff'rent be, or might not be at all.  
 Sole time and space (which substances are not)  
 Are objects which in thought we cannot blot.  
 Positive fate in substance known ne'er boast ;  
 All we conceive is consequent at most.  
*Consequent fate* is what assur'dly flows  
 From any object, which we pre-suppose :  
 Something suppos'd, the modes, relations too,  
 Congenial to such something, must ensue.  
 Such is the fate, to substance does pertain :  
 No fate why substance *must* exist, 'tis plain :  
 All fate, as freedom, (plainly in event)  
 Respecting substance, must be consequent.  
 " Granted, (you cry,) and substance by that fate  
 " Is as it is ; does, as it does, relate.  
 " Substance exists ; (we ask not why nor whence ;)  
 " Its modes, relations, *are*, in consequence.  
 " It *is* just as it is ; and *does* contain  
 " Necessity (too much) of guilt and pain."  
 Granted, say I : but so the point's not quit ;  
 Two modes in fate and freedom hold us yet ;  
 Important modes, peculiar in their claim,  
 Demand attention : *that*, *dependent* name ;  
*This*, *independent* : *this* to God must fall  
 Alone ; and *that*, in all things else, be all.  
 It must be thus, admit we pre-suppose  
 That all but God at God's volition rose.

What

What truth more obvious? God must stand secure  
 Above all change, because above all pow'r;  
 Except such change as his own pow'r may make  
 In his own modes, for his own glory's sake:  
 But all things else, whence modes relations grow,  
 Ev'n ev'ry essence, whence a fate can flow,  
 Must solely totally on him depend,  
 Be made and rul'd exactly to his end.  
 That things thus rose what sceptic dares deny?  
 No gleam of reason yields him warrant, why,  
 Things *might* thus rise; and, if I rightly trust,  
 The sequel clearly will evince, they *must*.  
 God, sole uncaus'd, by independent fate  
 Free and almighty, freely does create  
 When, what, he pleases, either bound or free,  
 Or blest or curst; a world, a worm, or thee.  
 Exalt this truth, down sinks the lie, sin-built;  
 No fort has fate to foster pain and guilt.

The only refuge, whither fate can fly,  
 Is either God expressly to deny,  
 Or, at the least, primordials to suppose,  
 Such as premis'd, dependent on no cause.  
 Bulwarks of vapour! Nature's ev'ry mode  
 Aloud proclaims dependence ~~on~~ a God;  
 Proclaims, God rais'd from nothing matter, soul,  
 Adapted each, and systemiz'd the whole.  
 'Tis plain, for system, aptitude must be  
 Among primordials, both in bound and free:  
 Primordials must be fit for proper ties:  
 From perfect parts a perfect whole must rise:  
 Discordant pow'rs, and modes not fitted right,  
 No strength and skill in system could unite:  
 And, without union, nothing could employ  
 Inherent pow'r to either grief or joy:  
 All would be chaos, torpor: — ties abstract,  
 Matter disperses, spirit cannot act. —  
 Due aptitude behold! See all combine!  
 Eternal was it thus without design?

Uncaus'd is aptitude through this immense,  
 In worlds, in atoms, and in pow'rs of sense?  
 Believe ye, without wisdom extant *it*, (11)  
 Which speaks, which beams, a wisdom infinite?  
 It shocks belief! Much rather might the parts  
 Of all the works of all the human arts  
 Exist eternally, minutely fit.  
 Can soul believe a miracle so great?  
 See, all around, the aptitude of mode  
 Declares a free, a wise, a mighty, God:  
 Form, number, weight and measure, all agree  
 To prove creation by Creator free.  
 Animal pow'rs attest, with force divine,  
 Their glorious origin, their God's design;  
 All fitted their due objects to explore:  
 Some fitted most sublimely to adore:  
 Fitness unfit, unless we thence suppose  
 A sov'reign object, an almighty cause;  
 A moral fitness, doubtless, must imply  
 A moral cause, an all-just deity.  
 That such relations are, let none dispute;  
 Of things themselves as wisely may we doubt.  
 All these relations in one chorus join;  
 All strive to magnify a pow'r divine;  
 All witness God, who gave them being, fit  
 To form a system, and who formed *it*.

Substance uncaus'd in all might be our creed,  
 Would modes of substance pliantly accede.  
 For grant we must, what is might still have been;  
 Did not its modes evince it did begin.  
 But mark the modes! Without a god's design  
 Things could not so exist, nor so combine.  
 Their wond'rous aptitude, 'tis prov'd, must rise  
 From a Creator pow'rful, moral, wise.  
 But grant (howe'er/absurd) without a God  
 Aptitude was, in foul's, in matter's, mode;

Shew,

\* Job xii. 7, 8, 9. — Minucius Felix, P. 130, Edit. Lugd. Bat. —  
 Cicero De Natura Deorum, Lib. II, P. 29, ad finem.



Shew, if you can, what myrrellous chance or fate  
Or self-design could things thus systemate. (12)

Chance, fate, design, were only modes, at best;  
Of pow'rs by sep'rate principles possest:  
How could the pow'rs (howe'er so modify'd)

Of sep'rate principles thus coincide?  
Thus each so wisely its due station claim  
To form this various, this stupendous frame?

Were things (13) eternal with such modes, such wit,  
As to be fitted and themselves to fit?

All nature's principles, that we descry,  
Loudly give this hypothesis the lie.

Who will, at pleasure, may the thing conceive;  
But common-sense will let no soul believe.

'Tis then the mode, in parts, in whole, that shews  
Nature deriv'd from a creative cause.

Not mere existence, we confess, but mode  
Presents the radiant signatures of Gods:

All nature's modes resistlessly evince  
God, his creation, and his providence:

Proclaim a wisdom, might and will divine,  
Which did create, attemper and combine;

And must, respondent to sublimest laws,  
Dispense forever stations, joys and woes.

If, then, as nature teaches, God bestow'd  
Being on all, and settled ev'ry mode,

He could, if needful, change each nature's frame;  
Or vary order, natures still the same.

His own perfection full he still must bear;  
Because exists no pow'r, which can impair:

Therefore, whatever does to that relate  
Must stand unchang'd, by consequential fate.

But all created nature subject lies  
Wholly to him, who made its being rise;

By him may be annihilated, chang'd;  
Or <sup>same</sup> its parts may variously be rang'd,

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

*Yet still in perfect harmony combine;*

*as the same notes in various music join.*

*Natures, relations must be modell'd still,*

*Just at the beck of his almighty will. Therefore*

*What chance & force hath risen to prevent?  
How has he ceas'd to be omnipotent?*

Therefore infer, in wisdom were it best,  
 Through all subordinate must all be blest;  
 Completely blest the reptile in the clay,  
 As the archangel shrin'd in brightest day:  
 Exempt from pain the foot ordain'd to tread,  
 And, to its feelings, happy as the head.  
 All would be fix'd in stations past annoy;  
 Or, in mutations, only change in joy.

Look nature through, vain worm! if not too blind;  
 Thou canst, through all the vast expansion, find  
 No fate but this, which from God's nature springs,  
 And from the natures he bestows on things;  
 No fate in things superior to his will;  
 No fate to render good impossible.

Whate'er's impossible, you must agree,  
 Implies, *at once to be and not to be.*  
 Whate'er is possible, you must allow,  
 For man to think, is so for God to do.  
 The few ideas of the human breast  
 Are only signatures by things impress:  
 As soon can he, who finds his God in fault,  
 Create a world from nothing as a thought:  
 But God, whom he blasphemeth, all that are  
 Conceiv'd eternally before they were; (14)  
 And things themselves more easily combines  
 Than he ideas, forming all designs.  
 Audacious worm! Can he in effort sink,  
 Who more is free to act than thou to think?  
 He who made thee that free and ruling soul,  
 Can he want pow'r to rule at will the whole?  
 I quake to hear an animated clod  
 Arraign the dread omnipotence of God!  
 He could, at pleasure, on the whole bestow  
 Or perfect happiness or perfect woe:  
 All the varieties of woe and bliss,  
 The life-fraught universe demonstrates this!

No fatal order, neither joys nor pains,  
Are possible, except as God ordains.

Behold how impotent is boasted fate! \*  
A lie, which Satan stamp'd on man in hate!  
An impious pretext shrewdly to deny  
God's holy sway, and loosen duty's tie!  
Ah! God's high glory no device can foil;  
Guilt's blasted engines on itself recoil,  
The more you batter, but the more you break  
Your own sham'd pates, and prove your malice weak;  
Absurd as impious! God, creation's cause,  
Must order absolutely all its laws.  
Creation is what the creator will:  
Good universal must be possible.

III. "How then did evil rise? Could God prevent,  
"Yet chose to propagate? What strange intent  
"Warp'd sov'reign goodness so? Why plant the bud?"  
Why! — Evil must be possible for good.  
Its possibility does good admit;  
Though its existence is the bane of it. †

1. To clear this point and dissipate each dream,  
*What, tell me what, is nature's end supreme?*  
GOD'S SOV'REIGN GLORY. — That's the final end  
Which, in creation, wisdom must intend. ||  
What could the all-blest'd Deity design,  
But to display his attributes divine?  
No end so good, so noble, shines confest:  
He must prefer the noblest and the best.  
Suppose he meant a perfect work to make,  
Say, whence could he the great exemplar take?  
The work most perfect must be what displays  
His perfect attributes in brightest rays.

Suppose

\* Chrysostom in Acta Apost. Cap. 22. Hom. 27.

† Lactantius, Epit. C. 21.

|| Rev. iv. 11. — Exodus xxxiv. 14. — Rom. iii. 23. — Deut. xxviii. 58. — Wisd. Sol. xii. 15, 36.



Suppose he meant much happiness to give ;  
 His creatures must by moral laws receive :  
 He could not fail to make a work, that suits  
 The nature of his glorious attributes :  
 His justice could not abdicate his due,  
 To give a fool's benevolence to you.

In short, whatever end to creatures seem,  
 His glory must, to God, outshine supreme.

He must display his wisdom, freedom, might,  
 And, chiefly, hate of wrong and love of right,  
 Ev'n holiness, of attributes the prime, (15)  
 Most worthy God most high, most far sublime :  
 Displaying that, he plainly must display  
 His other attributes, the noblest way :  
 To that great end he must his works dispense,  
 All his creation, all his providence.

Hence, it is plain, he must give each degree  
 Fit faculties, and claim obedience free :  
 Else how could he display, or creatures trace,  
*Wisdom, pow'r, freedom, equity, and grace?* (16)  
 These shine to man ; perhaps adorers higher  
 More and sublimer attributes admire :  
 But were not freedom giv'n, not these could shine ;  
 The great Creator could not beam divine.  
 Then creatures must have freedom : therefore ill,  
 Moral and nat'ral, must be possible :  
 For good both must be possible ; and yet  
 Neither is necessary, neither fit.\*

All must be perfect, if God's will was done ;  
 But then, for trial, all must do their own,  
 Free to observe or violate his laws,  
 To carve or cancel either joys or woes.  
 Hence guilt and pain may enter, though forbid :  
 And, since they may, 'tis evident they did.

God must create each rising system blest ;  
 Because in blessing shines his glory best.

By

\* Eccles. xv. 20.

By the same rule, he must preclude all ill  
 As far as possible, admitting will.  
 But since, in system, fitness of design  
 And stated order must be law divine ;  
 And since free-will may fondly disobey  
 That law divine, ev'n God's imperial sway ;  
 Evil may rise ; vice may with virtue blend ;  
 Then pain must pleasure join, for nature's end.  
 All possible probation, it is plain, (17)  
 All sanction, must be pleasure or be pain :  
 And in dispensing those, as all obey,  
 God must his moral attributes display.  
 Pleasure must be ordain'd, at once to try  
 And to reward, and rise with virtue high :  
 Pain too must be ordain'd, if vice be bred,  
 To try and punish, and with vice to spread.  
 In full perfection pleasure tries alone,  
 While all combin'd obey the sov'reign throne ;  
 If imperfection intervenes, then pain  
 Must rise, to warn all parties of the bane,  
 And try them more ; that good and bad may learn  
 How truth, all-sacred truth, is God's concern.  
 Upon these principles things must depend,  
 To serve God's glory, nature's sov'reign end :  
 Therefore, by nature's fundamental law,  
 Once all was happy ; sin occasion'd woe.

Pain rose at first God's holiness to prove ;  
 Ensign of wrath, erected yet in love :  
 Stedfast it stands, with kind severe intent,  
 Of wrath at sin a dreadful monument.  
 God's hate of sin it testifies severe ;  
 It makes vice odious, virtue still more dear ;  
 It fitly warns the wicked to repent ;  
 It fitly warns the righteous to prevent ;  
 It calls on ev'ry creature to defend  
 Self and the public, and the sov'reign end.

Thus pain is necessary, if sin rise,  
 To render creatures more maturely wise.

It scourges sin, but not from sin exempts ;  
 It leaves us free ; and, whilst it scourges, tempts.  
 Consistent with this plan, God must apply  
 Only such means as, while they succour, try ;  
 Must aid the good, retard the bad's decay,  
 Sep'rate at last, and in new spheres repay.

In short, infringing order, pleasure fails ;  
 Iniquity prevailing, pain prevails.  
 So rises evil from erroneous choice,  
 Effect of guilt and God's judicial voice :  
 All nat'ral evil, wretched beings know,  
 To moral evil wretched beings owe.

2. "*BUT virtue suffers, vice triumphant reigns.*"

Well ! injur'd virtue by the trial gains ;  
 Gains more experience, more divine regard,  
 More confirmation, more enhanc'd reward :  
 While vice indulges but a mean desire  
 Of lawless joys, in anguish to expire.  
 'Tis plain, in system, happiness and woe  
 Must not to one, but all connected, grow ;  
 Must grow from all to all, where all unite :  
 And this, for nature's sov'reign end, is right.  
 Hence each, his int'rest rightly understood,  
 Will seek his private in the public good ;  
 And all will join ill morals to restrain,  
 Which threaten all with injury and pain :  
 Fitly will all be lur'd, by social sway,  
 Freely to serve the whole, and God obey.  
 Trial more full will good and bad endure ;  
 The good improve, the bad have chance for cure.  
 Justice and grace to both require this plan ;  
 Then cease objection, cease thy murmurs, man !

To good or bad let pain at first befall,  
 It works its end ; it tries and chastens all :  
 Evil and good it makes distinct appear,  
 That all may evil hate, and good revere :

And



And wheresoe'er the load at first ~~be~~ cast,  
The good must rise, the bad ~~be~~ at last.

O sacred truth! probation must imply  
A retribution in futurity.

And hence, as morals deviate or excel,  
Ev'n simple reason bodes a heav'n or hell,  
But revelation, which alone can prove,  
Declares these states expressly from above.  
In them shall retribution all redress,  
And make the sov'reign glory shine express.

Virtue must suffer, vice triumphant reign,  
Else due probation neither could sustain;  
Then nature's end, God's glory, could not shine  
In retribution so express, divine.  
Therefore, what seems in trial most unjust,  
Ought to be possible; permit God must.

3. "METHINKS it still obnoxious to debate,  
"Which to prefer, or liberty or fate.  
"In happiness God's glory would have shone;  
"Why are we free, alas! to be undone?"

THIS plea, if for God's glory you intend,  
Must fail; for fate, at best, impairs that end,  
In happiness God's glory cannot shine,  
But as it shews his attributes divine:  
His moral attributes it cannot shew,  
But in subservience to a moral law:  
And therefore happiness can only be  
Upon condition of obedience free.  
I grant, in happiness, bestow'd aright,  
His glory shines the most divinely bright:  
Therefore of him the brightest beams we find  
In moral acts of grace and justice join'd;  
As in redemption, where we chiefly trace  
All his known attributes combin'd in grace:  
Pardon is largely giv'n to all, who will;  
And, to the just, reward ineffable:

While they alone, who stubbornly rebel,  
Must, since they will, be doom'd to final hell,  
Here shines his glory in meridian state,  
Rais'd to an height impossible in fate.

For man's advantage if you move the plea,  
Fate must be cast, right reason must decree.  
We grant, were happiness the grand intent,  
Mere fate were best ; no freedom should be lent ;  
Mere sense might then the ends of soul fulfil,  
Without imagination, mem'ry, will :  
Happiness needs but sense of happy strain ;  
Sublimer pow'rs would be bestow'd in vain,  
But if the noblest pow'rs in each degree  
From God to nothing, and obedience free,  
God's glorious nature fully to attest,  
Be the chief end, — then liberty is best.  
Immur'd in fate, our happiness had stood,  
Perhaps, eternal as the throne of God ;  
But nature then had far less nobly shewn :  
Grand pow'rs consist with liberty alone.  
Liberty does the noblest ends produce ;  
The noblest pow'rs in nature thence have use :  
It graces nature, as it honours God ;  
And is a private as a public good.  
Who would renounce his godlike pow'rs, to dwell  
Beneath an oyster, fate-bound, in a shell,  
Merely for happiness, which, soon or late,  
Free virtue gains in a celestial state ?  
Let wicked varlets, hating to reform,  
Wish themselves meaner than the meanest worm !  
Them it becomes low objects to admire :  
But let not all the deities expire,  
The myriads free, whom god-like pow'rs invest,  
Who all, by virtue, may be heav'nly-blest.  
Upon the whole, were nature chain'd in fate,  
The sum of good could not be nigh so great.  
Though vicious will withdraws from God some praise, (18)  
From man some pleasure ; this like nothing weighs,

Compar'd

Compar'd with all those faculties divine,  
Which in free systems only e'er could shine;  
Compar'd with God's high glory, end of all,  
Which could not shine, if nature could not fall.  
Shall God want glory, noble pow'rs the just,  
Because the wicked will abuse their trust?  
No, surely, no! — Prepost'rous thought indeed!  
More wisely far the Master hath decreed.  
The wicked's guilt occurs to good event,  
Exalts the just; themselves if they repent;  
And, in those attributes we most revere,  
Makes God himself more gloriously appear.

Confess my triumph! — Liberty is fit;  
Evil then possible God must admit:  
He must admit, that moral, nat'ral, ill  
Be, for the sake of good, made possible.  
The best of systems must, because the best,  
Be form'd obnoxious to be distress;  
Yet ill's not necessary; good might flow  
Through all expansion, and unknown be woe.  
Confess my triumph! —

IV. — — But, if reason fail,  
Lo! nature vouches: nature must prevail!  
Nature confirms, as far as nature can,  
The leading truths of revelation's plan.  
What nature vouches you must not contest;  
Your maxim is — *This system is the best*:  
On this concession must be understood,  
All nature's pow'rs and principles are good.  
All pow'rs are good; (say not abuse of pow'rs,  
Not sin is good; that inference was yours:)  
All principles no less, the plan of all,  
Must be supremely good and rational.  
Then freedom above fate you must confess;  
God's glory the best end, not happiness.

I. For see, in nature, freedom giv'n; see will:  
(Whence vice as virtue must be possible; Whence



Whence pain as pleasure liable to be :  
 Abuse of will infers necessity.)  
 See will exists ; and will, as chief and best  
 Of nature's pow'rs, gives use to all the rest ;  
 Yea, will gives use to ev'n the whole creation ;  
 For, lo ! the whole exists but for probation.

2. ALL ambient nature with this end compare ;  
 You'll find, *that nat'als all for morals are.*  
 For this alone God's works in system rose ;  
 Since but in system these could act on those ;  
 Union alone all means to act supplies :  
 Then for probation system needs must rise ;  
 And for probation only : God might bless,  
 Were union not, all life with happiness.  
 For this alone, see, nature through, combin'd  
 Mechanic matter and free agent mind : (19)  
 Abstract probation, mind should not be free ;  
 Matter were vain ; no mechanism needs be.  
 Then, clear as noon, probation is the aim !  
 That, which alone asks matter and this frame,  
 That, which alone admits free souls divine,  
 Must be the center of God's whole design.

Behold a system in full order rear'd ;  
 See understanding, join'd with will, conferr'd.  
 The use of order is for moral law ;  
 The use of understanding is to know ;  
 The use of law, of knowledge and of will,  
 Must be obedience to God's glory still.

3. AGAIN : how constant all mechanic laws !  
 Yet God does freely, as he made, dispose. (20)  
 The reason then explore, the end declare,  
 Why nature's laws are constant as they are.  
 'Tis plain, if nature's laws were varying still,  
 We could not reason or to good or ill :  
 'Tis on their permanency we depend,  
 To reason, or to act to any end.

If fire, for instance, seldom were the same,  
 But oft' inactive as a painted flame,  
 A pagan zealot might as well use paint  
 To roast a sacrifice or burn a saint.  
 If earth its solid nature did forego,  
 Water its fluid, by no stated law,  
 What use in either? Nothing could avail  
 Labour or forecast: who would plow or sail?  
 If the physician's balm, the murd'rer's bane,  
 Wrought still precariously, now strong, now vain,  
 Why stir to save or slay? So unforeknown  
 Cause and effect, probation could be none:  
 Only on stated laws can God enjoin  
 Probation's task, and prompt his chief design:  
 Probation then the reason we declare,  
 Why nature's laws are constant as they are.

4. BEHOLD again how happiness does flow  
 From virtuous conduct, and from vicious woe.  
 For as, to yield probation, it is plain,  
 A constant order gen'rally must reign,  
 So, for the same, from moral change must breed  
 A change in nature, such as God decreed.  
 God, since most free, most wise and good, must still  
 Persist in rectitude immutable:  
 He therefore must to morals still dispose  
 The system's range, by wise and righteous laws:  
 And moral creatures too must work some change  
 To good or evil, in the system's range:  
 Therefore, from change in morals, must ensue  
 A necessary change in nat'rals too:  
 It must from agence of the creatures flow;  
 It must, from God's exertion of his law;  
 That good and evil may distinct appear;  
 That all may evil hate, and good revere.  
 What ought to be, that is: through sin first came  
 The curse of God on nature's tainted frame;

And

And still so set are nature's secret springs,  
 That vice brings pain, and virtue pleasure brings;  
 Virtue does order, order bliss sustain;  
 Vice brings disorder, and disorder pain.  
 Virtue could only happiness impart,  
 If vice were not, to mis'ry to pervert.  
 Virtue ne'er harms, but in redressing ill;  
 Vice never charms, but in event to kill.  
 Vice causes all the woe, that flows from man;  
 And virtue all the bliss, that mortal can.  
 Therefore, in nature, sceptics must confess,  
 Without obedience is no happiness:  
 The reason's clear: God only can intend  
 That *sovereign good* to crown the *sovereign end*.  
 Can nature's voice more potently proclaim  
 Abuse of will the cause, whence evil came?  
 For what should seem the pristine cause of ill,  
 But what at present tends to cause it still?  
 Can nature's voice with stronger accent send,  
 God's glory is, not happiness, the end? (21)  
 Were happiness the end, say, reasoner! why  
 Does it depend on what can it destroy?  
 On moral conduct, or on any law,  
 That leaves a possible access to woe?  
 Were that the end, that end by man destroy'd  
 Would render God's most sacred purpose void.  
 Were that the end, it ought to stand secure  
 Above the shock of all created pow'r:  
 Were that the end, all would be blest, 'tis plain,  
 For but for trial e'er existed pain;  
 Trial succeeding fall; for, barring sin,  
 None had been injur'd, none had punish'd been.  
 But see on morals happiness depend:  
 Because not it, probation is the end.

5. LASTLY: 'tis plain, (probation God's grand view)  
 Both good and bad awhile must wait their due:

Vice



Vice must not instantly to hell be driv'n;  
 Nor virtue instantly advanc'd to heav'n:  
 Connected they must live, each other try,  
 Enhancing merit or demerit high:  
 So trial will be full; so God will shine,  
 In retribution, gloriously divine.  
 As fit, behold! — probation to create,  
 Virtue succumbs, whilst vice exults in state:  
 Virtue and vice in strong contention blend:  
 Result of system! fit to nature's end!

6. THUS nat'ral evil comes, 'tis understood,  
 From moral evil, but for moral good;  
 To mend the bad, to elevate the best;  
 And, chiefly, God's high glory to attest.

Thus scripture, reason, nature, all profess,  
 The sov'reign purpose is not happiness.  
 Thus scripture, reason, nature, all proclaim,  
 Probation for God's glory is the aim.  
 Occasion great! for hard it were to say  
 Why aught was made; excepting to obey.  
 See then *probation for God's glory* shine  
 The *sov'reign end* of all th'august design.

Each point survey with all your captious wit:  
 Exactly all to this great end is fit!  
 See *natures, laws, mutations*, all agree  
 For trying *virtue in obedience free!*  
 See *virtue's end*, devoutly to fulfil,  
 In sacred order, *God's imperial will!*  
 Thus does the universe on HIM depend,  
 Its *sov'reign Author* and its *sov'reign end*.

Behold, his GLORY stands the *final Cause!*  
 The universe to glorify him rose.  
 Whate'er emerges from created pow'r,  
 Evil or good, it glorifies him more.  
 Wisdom, pow'r, freedom, in each work we trace;  
 More they expand with equity and grace;

*Sully* In holiness sublime mature they meet :  
 His glory there shines aggrandiz'd complete.  
 Thus all his attributes, divinely bright,  
 Display'd ██████, *Whatever is, is right!*

V. THEN nature *must*, by just divine decree,  
*Be as it is* — with morals must agree :  
 And still, as vice and virtue ebb and flow,  
 In like degree must happiness and woe.

Such gen'ral temper reigns in ev'ry sphere  
 As best comports with gen'ral morals there :  
 While still, as special instances demand,  
 God interposes, with a special hand.

'Tis not for us, poor reptiles, to declare  
 The height, the depth, the round, of sov'reign care ;  
 Nor count the acts, nor say how swiftly wrought,  
 Outnumb'ring atoms, and outstripping thought.  
 Suffice that He, who occupies the throne  
 Of boundless empire, over worlds unknown,  
 Rule, in his might, his ample realms through space  
 With perfect wisdom, equity and grace :  
 Suffice that here dominion he maintain  
 By gen'ral laws, with slacken'd moral rein ;  
 And only partly punish or reward,  
 As special cases call for such regard ;  
 Not crushing vice, nor judging strictly here ;  
 But corresponding to probation's sphere.  
 In sphere probative, strictness would be wrong ;  
 To spheres retributive must that belong.  
 Here one or few he may defer or spare ;  
 Many may challenge his immediate care.  
 Hence so he orders, vice too often brings  
 To persons affluence of external things ;  
 To states but seldom ; oft'ner present bane :  
 For only virtue can a state sustain.  
 Hence, so he orders, persons often find  
 For virtue harm ; lose all but worth of mind :

*But*

But states, possess'd of virtue, mostly grow  
 In spight of all oppugnancy below.  
 States must in this life pass through all their doom :  
 But persons theirs must bide in life to come.  
 Suffice that, openly, he so dispense  
 His special acts, as best to wake due sense ;  
 Correcting vice, now curse a fertile soil ;  
 Now, blessing virtue, make a desert smile ;  
 Now take away, or now confer a crown ;  
 Now raise a kingdom, or now pull one down.  
 Suffice that, secretly, he so controul,  
 As morals claim, the temper of each soul ;  
 Exalt from strength to strength, from light to light,  
 By gradual aid, the studious of the right ;  
 Alike depress the daring to rebel  
 From depth to depth, from curse and death to hell.

All this for trial must be understood !

All, to display the attributes of God !

Self-perfect he, superlative o'er fate,  
 Virtue his love, and vice no less his hate,  
 He rules for that, for which he built the frame,  
*Probation ev'ry dispensation's aim !*

To that design, what deep, what various skill !

How all his ways conspire for trying will !

O'er will he watches with most special care :

(Else vain his providence, and vain our pray'r :)

His care of will makes all creation bend

To his high GLORY, great and sov'reign end !

Thus shines the system excellent in all !

Sublimely beams its grand original !

Ye wits ! all vain hypothesis resign :

Candidly own this real plan, divine !





## A P P E N D I X.

## N O T E S,

*Referred to in the preceding Poem by corresponding Numbers.*

(1)  
**H**OMINEM nosse se, et circumspicere debere, quid sit, unde sit, quare sit; utrum elementis concretus, an concinnatus atomis, an potius a Deo factus, formatus, animatus? Quod ipsum explorare et eruere sine universitatis inquisitione non possumus, cum ita cohærentia, connexa, concatenata sint, ut, nisi divinitatis rationem diligenter excuseris, nescias humanitatis. MINUCIUS FELIX, p. 125. edit. Lugduni Batavorum.

(2) Ὡς γὰρ φαίνεται, ὅτι πάντες μὲν ἀνθρώποι πρὸς τὸ ἀμαρτάνειν πεφύκαμεν. ORIGEN *contra CELS. lib. 3. — Rom. iii. and vii.*

(3) It is plainly impossible for a man to be morally (*i. e.* truly, perfectly) happy, till he can conform himself with delight to the will of his God.

(4) Here it will be proper to settle the ideas of *perfection* and *imperfection*: on a right understanding of these the whole argument rests. Our ideas of perfection are undoubtedly all relative, in some respect or other: however, we may consider perfection as of two kinds, *absolute* and *relative*. Absolute perfection is self-existent, self-sufficient good, of every kind, in the highest degree; and belongs only to God: it is transcendent, and far above our comprehension. Relative perfection is complete relative good; *i. e.* the exact fitness of a thing to a state or end. It belongs both to God and creatures: to God, as he is fit to produce and govern his works; to creatures, as they are fit to fill their place and end in the creation. This fitness is the only right idea of perfection in creatures; they are capable of this relative perfection only. It is usual, in comparing creatures of superior endowments or qualities with others inferior, to say, they are more *perfect*; but

But this is using the word *perfect* improperly for *endued*, or *exalted*, or some word equivalent. Creatures having superior endowments are not, on that account, properly more perfect; inferiors may be as perfect, (*i. e.* as competent to their place and end,) and sometimes are more so. As perfection is properly a complete fitness, perfection (in a sensitive and moral creature) is a complete sensitive and moral fitness, or a competence to fill its place, and preserve that order in nature, which God hath appointed to be the condition of happiness and the rule of obedience. Essential to our idea of natural perfection in a sensitive creature is entire happiness; or, at least, an entire fitness to the law in which happiness stands. Essential to our idea of moral perfection in a moral creature is entire obedience; or, at least, an entire fitness to obey the moral law. In both respects I say *at least*; because the imperfection of a creature's associates may hinder it, though perfect in itself, from being either entirely happy or entirely obedient. But an entire fitness in itself to be happy and obedient is its perfection: the abstracting of either of these (the deviating from that order which God hath appointed as the condition and law of both) infers *imperfection*. These are the author's ideas of perfection and imperfection pursued in this work. This he desires the reader to take along with him. Not but that one kind of imperfection may, in a secondary view, be termed perfection; that is to say, natural evil is such: considered as a consequence, to punish moral evil, it is a perfection or fitness: it is fit, respecting the chief end; and is unfit only respecting the happiness of the creature. Even moral evil, the worst of imperfections, does not diminish, but advance, the chief end. Yet we lament both sorts of imperfection, as being ruinous to the creature, whilst the chief end might have been as fully served without them; although, without a possibility of them, it could not; as will by and by be explained.

(5) The word *guilt* is here used in an improper sense. It, and all synonymous words, must be so used among fatalists, who exclude *freedom* out of their idea of a moral being. It here signifies a *necessary* deviation from a moral rule, instead of a *free* deviation, which is the proper sense of the word. It may be right to observe, that this word is sometimes used, as the word *sin* generally is, to signify either an *act* or a *temper*; *i. e.* either the transgression of a law, or a depravity of mind. Hence arises the distinction of *actual* and *original* guilt or sin; the first signifying transgression, and the last, innate depravity. This innate depravity, vice, or taint of the moral powers, is derived, like the infirmity and mortality of the natural powers, from parents to their children. In this poem, I have always taken the word *sin* in the usual latitude, to signify either the act or the temper, or both, as occasion required.

(6) Ὅτι ἀρετῆς μὲν ἵαί ἀνέλκας τὸ ἐκβάσιον, ἀνέλκας αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν ἕσταν. ORIG. *contra CELS.* lib. 4. See TERTULLIAN and LACTANTIUS to the same purpose.



(7) I say, *free to good or evil*; because a being, with the most perfect freedom of will, may not be capable of both moral good and evil. The possibility of these depends not only on the freedom of will, but also on the nature of objects and desires. We can only converse with objects known: if therefore we knew no objects capable of abuse, we could not offend: we can exert only the desires we have; if therefore we had no desires capable of abuse, we could not offend: yet might the will be perfectly free as possible. Note, will is to be distinguished from desire, as in the second book will be explained.

(8) Supposing the system of things to have been created or erected out of eternal principles, such as are here described, we may carry the hypothesis farther, and suppose those principles to be such, that, by being arranged in a certain order, they would necessarily form a system in perfect happiness; but that, on the least deviation from that order, they would necessarily fall into misery beyond God's prevention. This supposition affords a reason for God's requiring virtue in order to happiness; a reason which may satisfy those, who think happiness ought to be the supreme end of the creation, and who maintain that God should not (if he could do otherwise) sacrifice happiness to virtue; or should not make happiness to depend on virtue. *It is plain, if God was able to make things happy only in one certain order, and if the least deviation from it would necessarily produce misery beyond his prevention, he must require virtue of free agents, to preserve that order requisite to happiness.* It is strange that this notion has never been started before, amidst all the conjectures of the many subtle and fruitful heads which have agitated this subject. However, notwithstanding the plausibility which, I imagine, some persons may conceive to be in this notion, it seems to me clearly to be false: the plan laid down in the sequel of this poem is the truth. It was not want of power to make things as he pleased, that laid God under a necessity of requiring virtue in order to happiness: the only necessity, in that respect, which he lay under, was, that sort of necessity which arises from a moral fitness antecedent to his will, and from his wisdom and rectitude, by which he is invariably determined to pursue that fitness, or to do what is wisest and best. He created the principles of things out of nothing; and could have established happiness independent of virtue, if it had been the best and wisest so to do. But it was more worthy of him, as a moral God, and more honourable to his creatures, (who on that account received nobler powers,) to constitute his system as it is, with a capacity for virtue and vice, and, in consequence thereof, liable to happiness and misery; and to appoint its supreme end to be his own glory, both as he is a Creator and moral Governor. To have appointed his creatures happiness to be the supreme end, would have required a system incapable of deviation, and have done far less honour to him and his works. And farther observe, it is by the moral necessity, above noticed, that he was obliged to require the satisfaction of Christ in order to redeem the world.

(9) *The*

(9) *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.* (Psalm xiv.) A witty divine justly observes, *that nobody but a fool could say it.* I suppose he means, that *the invisible things of God are so clearly understood by the things that are made,* (Rom. i. 20.) that a man must be extremely deficient, either in the strength or use of his understanding, if he does not perceive the *being* of a God from his *works*: or perhaps he means, farther, that certain apprehensions of God are so congenial to human nature, that he, who wants such apprehensions, can scarcely be said to possess an human share of understanding. However, let it be granted that a fool, for once, may be right: admit there is no God: What then? Where is the consolation of the thought? Why, he will brag, with the Epicurean,

*Quare religio pedibus subjecta vicissim*

*Oberitur: nos exæquat victoria cælo.* Luc. lib. 1. V. 79.

Religion, conquer'd, crush'd in turn shall lie,  
While us the conquest equals with the sky.

But in this he will be a fool still! — For, though he indeed crushes religion, if he can annihilate the object of it, yet he gains no security from future existence, nor from pain: for, let him suppose what he will to have brought him into this present state, he must allow, the same cause may bring him into another state, and another, and so on to eternity: and every succeeding state may be (if the cause so inclines) as painful as any hell which man can imagine or God can create.

The atheist supposes all principles to be eternal; among which he must include his soul, whatever it be. He must suppose it independent on cause, as to its existence and qualities; and consequently must suppose that life is inseparable from it. And, though he supposes it dependent on cause, as to the exertion of its qualities, (that is, it may require fit objects and occasions in order to its exertions,) and therefore its exertions may, at whiles, be suspended for want of the conditions necessary to its acting and suffering; yet he must allow, that, whenever the conditions necessary to its exertions occur, then must its actions and sufferings revive: and, as those conditions have occurred in this state, they may occur in another and another to all eternity. Let him suppose the principles to act by *chance*, *fate*, or *self-design*, still the consequence will be much the same. Seeing that the principles are supposed independent on cause for existence and qualities, it follows, that neither their existence nor qualities can be annihilated: and as they cannot be annihilated, but must still act together, either by chance, fate, or design, it must be acknowledged improbable, if not impossible, that life should be long unoccupied. And, as life cannot be supposed to be long unoccupied, so neither can we justly hope, on any atheistic scheme, that it will in future be happier than it is at present; for, as far as we are able to judge of the component principles of things, there is no necessity in their na-  
tures

tures by which we shall be necessarily carried into an happier state, neither is there so much as a probability in their natures from which an happier state may be expected; but a worse state possibly may ensue.

*Nunc ratio nullâ est restandi, nulla facultas;*

*Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum. Luc. lib. 1. V. 3.*

Now, to resist, no pow'r, no means, we know;

We still must dread, in death, eternal woe.

Why did not Lucretius foresee that his own lines might thus be turned against him? He applies them against religion; but they may be far more justly applied against atheism. It has been shewn, that, on any scheme of atheism, there is great reason to dread eternal misery; because there is not any thing imaginable, in such a scheme, which can rationally be supposed able to prevent misery or to bestow happiness: but, on the scheme of religion, there is great reason to hope eternal happiness; because there is a power supposed able both to prevent misery and to bestow happiness. How wretchedly mistaken, then, are atheists, who think to elude the dread of a future state by excluding God and providence? Such an exclusion alone can render a future state dreadful to men, who are what men ought to be. The admission of God and providence divests a future state of all terrors to worthy men, and to all but persons who both are wicked and resolve to continue so. On any atheistic scheme, we can hope nothing better in a future state than we experience in this; nay, worse may ensue: but, on the scheme of religion, if we live well, we may reasonably hope what is infinitely better than what we now experience, and may abandon all dread of future pain. The atheist can propose to gain nothing but, first, a licence to sin, (which, as his conscience tells him, it is fit there should be a God to punish; and which, as experience tells him, renders the present life more miserable,) and, secondly, a probability of never being happier, but rather far more miserable. This is all the atheist can gain. But the religious man justly and nobly proposes to gain virtue and heaven: in consequence, he acts so as to secure the greatest temporal comfort, the ineffably pleasing hope of being exquisitely happy forever hereafter. What joy will the atheist balance with this? For a man to be as sure as reason, revelation, and a well-spent life, can make him, of soon exchanging this scene of confusion, wickedness, and misery, for one of holiness, harmony, and joy, is certainly the most sublime and ravishing pleasure, of which mortal is capable. If, then, thou wouldest be happy, here or hereafter, reject atheism both in belief and practice; believe in God, and live accordingly.

Let me add, that they, who suppose the chief end of the creation to be *happiness*, are, with respect to futurity, in almost as bad an opinion as atheists: for, if *happiness* be the chief end of the creation, the world is now as happy as possible. Was happiness the chief



end, God must make creation at first, and continue it always, in as happy a state as he is able to give: and, if the world now enjoys all the happiness God can give, we have small room to hope we shall ever be in a happier situation: a supposition to many, and I am sure to me, not very comfortable. But, thank God, the supposition is false. The end of the present state is *probation*, and not happiness; therefore we are not to expect full happiness here, but as a reward hereafter, which God can raise as high as he pleases.

(10) Here, note diligently the difference between *positive* or *absolute* necessity, and that which is only *relative* or *consequential*. *Positive* or *absolute* necessity is that which cannot be imagined not to exist: as in time and space, which we cannot so much as imagine not to be: *relative* or *consequential* necessity is that which follows only from the previous supposition of something, whence it must be derived. Thus, supposing the natures of things to be what they are, it must follow, that their relations must be what they are, by consequential necessity. In respect to the nature of God, we must first suppose it to be; and, secondly, that it is independent on cause, both for existence and manner of existence: then it will follow, by consequential necessity, that the divine nature must eternally be what it is. And this is a necessity approaching to *positive* or *absolute* the nearest that we can conceive in any substance whatever. This consequential necessity is the same in effects as if it were absolute; for, though we can as easily imagine the non-existence of God as of any thing else, yet, once supposing his existence, we cannot suppose him to cease to exist, because he is independent on cause; therefore the consequences of his existence must be just the same as if he existed by absolute necessity. It is plain, that God exists by a consequential independent necessity; and all derived substances exist by a consequential necessity dependent.

(11) It is true, we must suppose the divine Being himself to possess an excellency infinitely transcending the most excellent of his works, and to exist in all his aptitude to produce other beings, without any previous wisdom to cause his excellence and aptitude. But this is not so hard to conceive in him, as is an uncaused aptitude in other beings. His uncaused fitness (both in himself and to produce other beings) is, in itself, agreeable to reason to suppose; because he is a simple being, whose attributes may be really all one: but a fitness, without cause, among innumerable different beings is not agreeable to reason to suppose: we naturally conclude that their fitness is the work of a divine intellect; as, when we see a house or a picture, we naturally conclude it to be the work of an architect or painter.

(12) By *chance*, *fate*, and *design*, is only meant the mode in which things are or act. *Chance* and *design* are not modes of *being*, arising from the being itself, but only of *action*: *fate* is considered as a mode of *being* as well as of *action*. Thus time and space are said to exist in the mode of *positive* or *absolute* fate, because there is such a necessity of their existence,

istence, that we cannot so much as imagine their non-existence. God is said to exist eternally in the mode of *consequential fate*; because, being self-existent and subject to no power, he must consequently exist eternally of independent necessity. All other beings exist in the mode of *dependence*: but, if God will not annihilate them, they also must exist, by consequent necessity, forever. Fate is also considered as a mode of *action*, as are chance and design. Thus, we say that a thing acts by fate, when it acts necessarily: we say it acts by chance, when it acts without necessity or design; i. e. when it acts freely but not intentionally. Free beings often act by chance, and alone are capable of acting in that mode. We say a thing acts by design, when it acts both freely and intentionally. Note, that chance, fate, and design, are (strictly speaking) not *causes*, in respect either of being or action; they are only *modes*: misled by the form of certain phrases, men too commonly consider them as *causes*.

(13) In this place, the word *eternal* is used as equivalent to *self-existent* or *uncaused*. But some, perhaps, will not allow it to have properly that force: "For, say they, although what is self-existent must be eternal *a priori*, yet what is so eternal may not be self-existent; for we can suppose an eternal effect proceeding from an eternal cause: and, indeed, we think it probable that the eternal Cause might actually produce eternal effects. Not but that we also grant the contrary to be possible: for the said Cause can produce effects in any point of time, either by making a new creation, or by altering or annihilating an old, or in any possible way it pleases. We only contend, that, although the world was *created*, yet we cannot thence necessarily conclude that it was not eternal: to obtain certainty in that point we must refer to tradition or revelation: for we can conceive a possibility of its being eternal, both as to matter and form, by considering it as an eternal effect of an eternal cause."

Now, I confess, that in this notion there appears no impossibility. Our difficulty, of admitting the possibility of an eternal effect from an eternal cause, arises partly from the prejudice we get from being used to consider temporary causes and effects, but chiefly from our inability to comprehend eternity, or to have a positive idea of any thing eternal. We are apt to consider an effect as posterior to its cause, both in order of nature and order of time. In order of nature it must be posterior; but in order of time it may not; nay, in some sense, it cannot: for, in some sense, the cause and effect are always co-eval; and we cannot conceive of them otherwise. To understand this, we must distinguish a causing power from a cause. A causing power may exist without being a cause, i. e. without acting: but, if it acts, or is a cause, it must produce an effect in the same moment, and that in proportion to the force it exerts. Thus, the moment a power becomes properly a cause, it produces an effect: we cannot conceive of it otherwise. Therefore, if we will suppose God to be properly an eternal cause, i. e. to have acted eternally, he must have produced

an eternal effect. Therefore the difficulty truly lies, not in conceiving the possibility of an eternal effect, but in conceiving the possibility of an eternal cause; i. e. a power eternally acting. If we admit the cause, the effect must be admitted. It will be granted, I suppose, that God *thought* eternally; why not also *act* and *cause* eternally in any other respect? In short, the whole difficulty at last lies in this; our faculties are made to comprehend only temporary and finite things; and we can form no positive idea of any thing eternal; we can only see the possibility and necessity of something being so.

Eternity and infinity, and all things of which they are ever predicated, have always greatly puzzled metaphysicians; though, in some cases, it is strange that they should. The reason is, chiefly, that our faculties are made only to comprehend temporary and finite ideas, and therefore can but partially, and very imperfectly, conceive of eternity and infinity; and, partly, that men are apt to bewilder themselves in words, especially when writing, conversing, or thinking, upon difficult subjects. Some have professed to doubt, whether space be infinite, or time eternal; which no man can possibly do, who uses the words in their usual and proper meaning. The proper notion of infinity is boundless space or room; as that of eternity is time without beginning or ending. When the words are applied to any thing else, they are applied either in an improper transferred sense, or to things as they relate to space and time. The attempting to define space and time has caused great perplexity. They are so simple, that every man has clear ideas of them without a definition; and defining can only serve to obscure them. We also predicate the same things of them as of substances; which makes some rashly call them either substances or modes of substance; though nothing appears in the mind more distinct than the difference between them and substance; nay, also between them and all modes of substance. Surely nothing can be a greater impertinence than to confound them with substances, on account of some predicates being applied to both as common to both. There are still some things peculiar to each, which will keep them forever very distinct. A clown of common sense could never mistake their distinctions: uncommon absurdities are the privilege of great philosophers. Space has sometimes been considered as a substance; and sometimes both it and time have been considered as modes of substance: yet nothing can be more repugnant to the idea, every man must necessarily have of time and space. We as clearly conceive them to be distinct from, and independent of, all substance, as we conceive one substance to be different from another, or apprehend that nothing is not something. Some will have them to be mere ideas. But with equal, if not with better, reason, might it be insisted, that substances are only ideas; for my mind forces me to conceive, that its ideas of time and space arise from time and space as things external, as much as that its ideas of substances



stances arise from substances as things external : and it forces me to conceive of time and space as impossible to be supposed away ; whereas I can easily suppose substances, and consequently ideas too, to be all away, and nothing but empty time and space to remain. It is said, we acquire our ideas of time and space by means of substances ; and, if there were no substances, we could have no ideas of time and space : therefore time and space are either substances, or modes of substances, or ideas. This is nothing to the purpose ! I grant that we could have no ideas but through substances : it is through substance that we acquire the idea of nothing : but will any one conclude thence, that nothing is something, or that nothing is the mode of something, or that it is a mere idea ? We acquire the idea of substances themselves through secondary qualities, (as they are called,) which are truly nothing but ideas ; yet will any body therefore say that there is no substance ? Nothing can be more absurd and contrary to the feelings of his own mind. It signifies not, therefore, in this argument, how an idea is acquired ; the question is, what does it represent ? Does it represent substance or mode of substance ? Or is it a mere idea, *i. e.* a mere effect on the mind, which the mind conceives to be made on itself by a substance ? Or does it represent time and space in such a manner, that the mind necessarily conceives them to be external to itself, yet to be neither substance nor mode of substance ? My mind tells me, and that beyond all possibility of doubt, that the last is the truth. — Time and space are represented to my mind as having an *absolute necessity* of existing ; (if I may use the word, *existing*, of objects which are no substances. Language obliges us to speak of time and space, and of mere negations, as if they were substances ; which causes great embarrassment.) This absolute necessity of existing is peculiar to time and space ; for I can easily imagine all substances (and consequently all ideas) to be utterly annihilated, and nothing but blank time and space to remain behind. And, though I cannot *comprehend* an infinite space or an eternal time, *i. e.* have a positive idea of infinity and eternity ; yet I can and must *apprehend*, that space is infinite and time eternal. I am under a necessity of *apprehending* them thus, as much as of apprehending them at all. But my limited faculties will permit me to *comprehend* only a few parts or finite quantities of each : I perceive them to be unlimited ; but I find my faculties are limited to take in but a small portion of them. — As time and space are independent of substance, so is substance independent of time and space : *i. e.* substance depends not on time and space for existence ; only it must necessarily bear relation to them, as necessarily existing in them. Such relation some logicians have termed *extrinsic modes* of substance ; a term which may be admitted as useful in some cases, if care is taken not to be misled by it. Evident it is, that some substance must have been eternal ; *i. e.* present to every point of time ; for otherwise there could have been no substance now. The self-existent being, or God, must have been eternal.

eternal: we know not whether any other substance was so or not. Some substance may be infinite, i. e. present to every point of space; but we know not that any substance is so, because we can only perceive a possibility of it; necessity of it we cannot perceive: we can only perceive a possibility of several things, of which we can see no necessity nor probability. Thus (notwithstanding what some persons have argued to the contrary) I can apprehend the possibility of an infinite number or series of substances: I can apprehend the possibility of an infinite substantial line, of an infinite substantial surface, or of a substance infinite in all dimensions: but I can perceive no necessity of any of these: on the contrary, my experience of substances inclines me to believe, that there is no such thing as a substance infinite in any of these respects; excepting the divine Being, who probably is infinitely immense, or occupies all space, all infinitude. But, though I can and must apprehend the possibility of all these infinities, yet, such is the nature and operation of my mind, that I can only partially comprehend them; i. e. I can have a positive idea of only a small part of any of them. — These notions are easy enough to persons, who can pursue their ideas without confusion. The confusion is owing to our partial way of conceiving infinity and eternity, and to the embarrassment arising from words. Language obliges us to use the same words and phrases in speaking of objects very different; *as*, time and space, and substance and nothing. But, howsoever we may *say*, we cannot *conceive*, of time and space, and substance and ideas, &c. otherwise than I have distinguished them; for to conceive otherwise would be repugnant to our necessary sense or perception of each; and therefore impossible: people, who pretend to conceive otherwise, only fancy, or rather say, that they do.

I will only subjoin, that, though I can suppose an infinite addibility of matter, I cannot suppose an infinite divisibility of it, as some fancy they can; because infinite addibility is compatible with the ideas of matter, whereas infinite divisibility is repugnant to it. I see that matter may be infinitely increased in all dimensions, but not infinitely diminished; for diminishing of its dimensions perpetually must at last take its dimensions quite away, and reduce it to nothing. My mind, indeed, is as capable of dividing as of adding *ad infinitum*; but I see clearly that infinite division is only an operation of my mind, and that the nature of matter is incapable of such division. The nature of things does not depend on the operation of my mind. It is confounding one thing with another, which makes all the difficulty in these questions: if we would consider every thing simply, as it is in itself represented to us, and observe in what manner our minds operate concerning it, all would be easy.

(14) This consideration, that the ideas of all things, real or possible, existed in God before things themselves had being, does, above all others, convince us of the immense disparity between him and ourselves. This, added to the consideration of his power, which produced

produced to being such things as he thought fit, is enough to overwhelm us with amazement and awe in the contemplation of his eternal, unfathomable, and glorious, nature.

(45) Here observe, that Scripture entirely represents the holiness of God as his principal attribute, and consequently as the ultimate end of all his works: his other attributes appear to be exerted only in subservience to this. And is this surprising? Does not the holiness of God necessarily appear to us to be his sublimest attribute: even that, which the most truly constitutes him God? It is that to which our minds instinctively yield the highest honour: it is that, which the whole fabric of nature seems chiefly accommodated to display: as, in the sequel of this poem, will fully appear. Indeed, in the view only of things present, the observation holds true in general, that *God's love or hatred cannot be known by all that is before us*; for one event happens to the righteous and to the wicked: and this too is proper in a state of probation. But, if we survey the full account of things from the beginning to the end, as set forth in the history and prophecies of Scripture, and confirmed by other records, we shall see that the whole order of things is conducted upon a most wise plan of probation, in which the visible interposition of God, as far as necessary or proper, is strikingly exhibited; and we shall be satisfied from the account, by seeing things applied to that purpose (probation for the glory of God) for which their natures appear eminently to be fitted. Such an account of *past* and *future* is evidently necessary to evince and illustrate a divine providence; and consequently to give us the most noble and useful ideas of God. For this reason (were there no other) a divine revelation and history are necessary, as being the only means of conveying the most important knowledge; for, from only our sight of nature, we can only learn what is present; a degree of knowledge quite inadequate to the purposes of religion and morality. As a revelation was necessary, so does the Bible appear to be that revelation wanted: for it gives a *regular* and (whatever may be imagined by those who do not or will not understand it) a *rational* account of divine providence; and it has besides a strong mark of a divine original, which no other book or record, ancient, or modern, can pretend to. It relates and foretels several matters, which only God can accomplish, and which nothing human could invent; whatever imitative fictions may have been made afterwards. The whole account of Scripture is consistent; and all it ascribes to God is worthy of him: its principal scope is to magnify his *holiness*. This is a convincing proof of its divine authority. It represents God as he becomes him: it represents God as transcendently *holy*; as jealous over his creatures, and watchful to note their obedience and disobedience, in order to reward and punish. Under this notion, God is represented as punishing the sin of the first man with depravity and death, not only in himself but in all his descendants; as destroying the world by a deluge; as contracting the life of man, &c. &c. &c. and chiefly as requiring the sacrifice of the  
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promised seed to atone for the sins of mankind. All these things were done, and still much more (it informs us) will be done, in order to display the divine *holiness*. Let us not imagine, then, that obedience and disobedience to the supreme Being are matters of little moment. Obedience is the principal end of nature; and, in God's consideration, is of more value than all our lives and happiness: this he severely has made, and will make, his erring creatures to know. — See Cicerō *De legibus*, Lib. II. §. 10.

(16) Here it may be proper to anticipate some objections likely enough to be made. The author here speaks of the attributes or qualities of God, as God himself must do, to speak intelligibly to men: he must ascribe to himself justice and mercy, love and anger: but hence a philosopher is not to think, that the divine and human qualities of the same name are the same in *essence*; they are only the same in *end*: i. e. the human moral qualities and the divine correspond to the same *ends*: which is quite as sufficient for all purposes of religion and morality as if they were the same in *essence*. God must have made the moral qualities of his creatures correspondent in end to his own; differ from his they must in *essence*, as much as the creatures' natures differ from his. This topic will be more enlarged on in its proper place.

(17) It may be proper, by a note here, to be more explicit upon this subject, although it is sufficiently elucidated in the last book. I must beg the reader to observe, that we cannot conceive how God could form and govern a system of probation upon other principles than those which, as appears in nature and revelation, he has employed. Pleasure must be used to try and to reward: pain, if vice arises, must be used to try and punish. In order to trial, there must be a prospect open of acquiring present pleasure, or of avoiding present pain, by a desertion of duty. This is necessary to prove whether free creatures will adhere to duty, and love it more than present pleasure, and dread the violation of it more than present pain. And, in order to encourage them to adhere to duty, and to deter them from violating it, there must be a prospect, more or less open, of gaining future pleasure and of avoiding future pain, by an adherence to duty. Not that we are to love future pleasure or dread future pain more than we love duty or hate the violation of it; but this discipline is necessary to bring us (in a way of probation) to love duty for its own sake, and to hate the violation of it as such. We neither are, nor can be, required to cease from loving pleasure and hating pain; but we are, and must be, required to prefer the consideration of duty to both; and to seek this, or shun that, only in the way of duty. This is evidently necessary to probation; which, as far as we can judge, could not be established on other principles. This, I hope, may serve to silence those, who alledge, that *virtue* is nothing more than *seeking present pleasure in the discreetest manner*: and likewise those, who assert, that *virtue* is altogether mercenary in seeking future pleasure. Virtue is loving

loving duty (or, perhaps, more properly, is loving things according to duty) above every other consideration: observe, it consists in loving duty; not exclusive of, but above, every other consideration. The truth is, we must be disciplined by pleasure and pain, in order that we may learn to love and delight in duty as our supreme good, and to abhor the violation of it as the greatest evil. This is our probation, and the only probation possible. Sober common-sense tells every man this truth, howsoever visionary philosophy may be embarrassed about the matter. Let it be admitted, that *probation of the creatures for the glory of God* is the chief end of the creation, it will necessarily follow, that God could not make and govern things on other principles beside those exhibited in nature and revelation. He must *create*, and, in case of a fall, must *curse*, and *redeem*. To exercise and display his *natural abilities*, he must create; to exercise and display his *moral as well as natural attributes*, he must create some creatures moral, and govern them after a moral manner. In case of a fall, he must *curse*, either as he did, or in some way equivalent; in order to shew his severity against sin: then it becomes equally necessary that he should *redeem*, in some way or other, in order to shew his mercy. Also a redeemer or mediator may in some cases be necessary in moral fitness, from an unavoidable concurrence of things, and to answer abundance of valuable purposes, but especially to evince both God's severity and goodness in the most eminent manner. On the whole, it is plain, that he could not have done otherwise than he has done; however, he could not have acted on other principles, to manifest all his attributes in the amplest manner. His holiness is the chief of his attributes; that which most properly denominates him *God*, or sovereign Governor of the universe; it is the center and standard of his attributes, the perfection of his perfection: therefore it was peculiarly expedient that he should manifest his holiness, which accordingly he has done. And farther observe, while he manifests his attributes in the best manner, he also consequently bestows on his creatures the best faculties and highest dignities: *their glory and his* must rise together. This ought to stop all petulant murmurs; as if he had sacrificed the creature's good to his own honour. The grand purpose of endowing the creatures with the best faculties, and of manifesting his own attributes, obliged him to create them on these and no other principles. In order to the purpose of exalting their dignity and his own glory, he could not govern them on other principles; none other could consist with their and his nature. This, when rightly understood, (as I hope my efforts in this work will contribute to make it,) will prove the scheme of holy Scripture to be perfectly rational; and not only rational, but, in its leading principles, necessary, entirely necessary, to the only possible ultimate end of a creation; that is, first, the perfection of it, and, lastly, the glory of God.

There are people of a certain turn, advocates for *free grace*, who will be ready to quarrel with me for asserting that *God must redeem*:

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they will urge St. Paul against me — *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that salvation is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* But they mistake both me and the apostle. The apostle, who manifests in all his epistles a deep anxiety to combat the errors of the time, especially to prove that the law (of nature and Moses) was insufficient alone (without faith in Christ, which makes up for our deficiencies in obeying it) to secure salvation. — The apostle, I say, in this and other such texts, only means to assert the insufficiency of the law, and the expediency of faith in Christ; he means, that man's obedience to the law must be imperfect; and therefore nothing could be claimed on that obedience without faith in Christ joined with it: faith in Christ was necessary as a remedy to our weakness in obedience, seeing that God, in his mercy to our infirmities and miseries, had set forth Christ to be our propitiation, or to take off the curse imposed for sin. Certainly the apostle's argument is right — *Not for works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy, he saves us.* Nevertheless, I presume that my argument is equally right too; his and mine do not interfere, but perfectly agree. I affirm, with the apostle, that *for our works of righteousness* God is not obliged to redeem; but, *for the innocence of some, and to manifest his own mercy*, he is obliged. This, I think, is plain beyond a doubt: if a creature is made miserable without its own fault, and never offends, God is bound in equity, is bound by his rectitude, to redeem or relieve that creature: whether it did any good works or not we do not enquire; works are out of the question. Again, if a creature falls into misery by its own fault, and offends no more, or not much, I can easily conceive that equity may require such a creature to be redeemed. However, this is certain, that, to shew his mercy, God *must*, absolutely *must*, redeem many sinful creatures: mercy can be shewn only in pardoning offenders. St. Paul would not deny this. He only denies the sufficiency of works in the law without faith in Christ, (as his adversaries obliged him to do with the greatest vehemence) I deny the same: but I assert, that God *must* be obliged, by equity and rectitude, to redeem the innocent, though their works may give them no claim to any thing; and he must be obliged also to redeem some that are wicked, for displaying his mercy and glory. The same, I am sure, St. Paul would have asserted, had he met with the same occasion. *By our works then God is not obliged to redeem.* This is St. Paul's argument. *But by his rectitude in respect to the innocent, and for the purpose of displaying his mercy, he is obliged.* This is my argument. The apostle and I have no difference; I hope we and our friends shall have none. Man's works oblige not God; but his own equity and mercy do.

(18) Understand only, that the sinner withdraws his praise from God; and thereby, as far as in him lies, detracts from God's glory: but not that God's glory is thereby diminished: his glory being the chief end, nothing which happens can defeat, but must advance, it. Accordingly, it is evident, as I observe below, that God's glory is advanced



advanced by the fall: not but that it might have been equally advanced, and certainly would, if the fall had never happened: it would have been equally advanced by some other way: but, however, it was advanced by the fall; and as much by that, as it would have been otherwise. Let the creatures fall or stand; the glory of God is equally served. But not so is the rectitude and happiness of the creation: for so much sin is so much loss of rectitude to the creation; so much pain is so much loss of happiness, whether it be lost only for a while or forever. The righteous who suffer undeservedly, and the guilty who repent, may indeed be rewarded, at the last, with higher happiness than would have fallen to their particular lot, had they never suffered nor been guilty: but then the share of happiness, which the damned lose, will be lost forever, and the pain they suffer will be forever established.

(19) This is all that the pharisees meant by *fate*. Yet, from the ambiguity of a place in Josephus, some writers of great name (enterprising in themselves mistaken notions about fate) have asserted far otherwise. the words of Josephus are, δοκῆσαν τῷ θεῷ κρᾶσι γινώσκειν, το τῷ ἔκθεσι (i. e. ἡμαρμῆσι) βουλευτήριον, το τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τῷ διδόναι (i. e. θεῷ, as I think) προσχωρεῖν μετ' αἰετῆς, ἢ κακίας. That is, as I understand it, *They (the pharisees) thought, that God had made a mixture (or temperament) of the counsel of fate and of men; it being his design to give place for virtue and evil: i. e. to admit a possibility of them.* That this is the true meaning of Josephus is evident to me from a place in chap. 3. of the Jewish wars: *The pharisees say, that all things are not the work of fate: and from another in chap. 12. They attribute all things to fate and God: (I understand, to the settled order which God hath appointed, and to God's over-ruling and interposing therein. This must be his meaning, if consistent with himself: for, in the first-cited place, he supposes fate to be nothing but the result of God's will.) And, continues he, the power of doing right or wrong, they suppose, lies much in men; yet that the aid of fate concurs in every thing.* This is true philosophy. Such a mixture of necessity and liberty, as the pharisees seem to have supposed, is and must be appointed, in order to the trial of will. TRISMEGISTUS in *Pimand.* C. 12. §. 5. PINDAR *Olymp.* 2. and SENECA *De Providentia*, C. 5. if they be consistent with themselves, can mean no more; for they all suppose free-will as well as fate.

It appears, that, by ἡμαρμῆν, the Greeks usually understood nothing more than the *common course of nature*, which they supposed (as all men instinctively and necessarily do) subject in a due degree to be varied by free agents, acting either by chance or design. Thus DEMOSTHENES, *De Corona*, magnifying the generosity of the Athenians, affirms, *That they did not esteem themselves to be born only for father and mother, but for their country.* Then he asks, what is the difference between these two sentiments; and replies, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τοῖς γονεῦσι μόνον γινώσκειν νομίζων, τον τῆς ἡμαρμῆς καὶ τον αὐτομάτου θάνατου περιμένει, ὁ δὲ

That is, He, who thinks himself born only for his parents, waits for the death by fate, or for an accidental death; but he, who thinks himself born for his country, will rather die voluntarily than see it enslaved. Here, it is plain, that he supposes, either chance or choice may anticipate the death by fate: therefore he can mean nothing by fate, but the course of nature, which of itself brings on death in due season; and with which either chance or design may interfere, to bring on death sooner. See VIRGIL, *Æneid* IV. 696. and X. 467. and HOMER, *Iliad* IX. 415.

It seems strange, that all philosophers do not perceive that there must be a mixture of necessity and liberty; and that the general constitution and order of the creation must be as they are, for the purpose of trial and for the display of the attributes of God. Necessity is, in some respects, essential to every being and every system; and is especially so to a moral system: for liberty, if not joined with necessity, could have no use: there could be no objects to act upon, nor rules to act by: for passivity, union, and rules of action, do suppose necessity. Some talk as if they thought that liberty should be so boundless as to admit no necessity; others perceive so much necessity in things that they assert there is no liberty: both sorts offend against common-sense and experience. I hope it will be understood, from the premises considerations, that there is, and must be, a mixture of necessity and liberty in every system of God's forming; for one without the other would be in vain.

(20) Some philosophers think, that nature is so entirely linked to God, that every motion proceeds from him alone: others suppose it to be detached from him, that all things act solely of themselves, by virtue of powers which he originally gave them: they affirm, that nature will not admit of God's interposition; that its laws are immutable. Both parties think their own notion most worthy of God; but both are plainly mistaken. Every system, made by a moral God, must be a moral system; of course, it must be replenished with free-agent beings; it must be established on stated mechanic and moral laws, yet subject to certain changes, both from the agency of the creatures and from the Creator's own interposition. This must be the case, unless we will suppose the system of nature inadequate to its noblest end and use. i. e. to try, reward, and punish moral beings; for which it must be altered suitably to their morals: and unless we suppose God negligent of displaying his noblest attributes, his moral attributes, his holiness, which can be displayed only in the creation and government of such a moral system. The notion most worthy of God and his works is, that he made free beings, subject to certain fixed laws, for the sake of trial; but that he superintends every moment, interposes to suspend, change, and controul, according to the laws of his infinite rectitude and wisdom; and that every thing existing is more subject to his will, than a finger or eye-lid is to ours.

Not

Not only nothing *can* happen but what he foresaw possible to happen; but also nothing *shall* happen but what he will of choice permit. But it is plain he will permit to happen, by the fault of his creatures, many things which ought not to happen: that is, he will permit, by his natural laws, many things forbidden by his moral laws; even things repugnant to that order, which he hath established as the basis of perfection and happiness, and as the rule of moral action. All this is necessary in a moral system; a system which is most worthy of a moral God, a God who alone deserves to be called God. In brief, so fixed must things be as to answer the purposes of trial; and likewise so mutable as to answer the same end: so disposed must be the whole as still more and more to manifest the divine attributes, by carrying things on through successive seasons and changes, adapted to the morals of the creatures; and, finally, to shew, most truly and sublimely, that God is *wise in all his ways, and holy in all his works*. This is the sublime scripture-plan! A plan that defies all rational objection! A plan beyond all comparison wise and good! — Blush, infidel, blush!

(21) Many affect to maintain, that happiness is (or however ought to be) the ultimate end. But all nature opposes this notion; and surely so does reason too; as I think I have proved. The glory of God is the ultimate end. And there is an end subservient to that, which is yet superior to happiness; and that end is the perfection or best order of the system. Nay, consequently too, the perfection or fitness of each individual is an end superior to happiness. Happiness, even true happiness, is indeed a necessary concomitant of perfection; and every man naturally expects happiness as a reward for prosecuting his own perfection and that of the system for the glory of God. This expectation is a great support to virtue in arduous cases: for, though the perfection or fitness of the system is amiable in itself, abstracted from this expectation of individuals, and ought to be chosen for its own excellence, yet it would be very hard for individuals to pursue it through dangers and sufferings without expecting happiness to reward the pursuit. However, happiness is to be considered only as an adjunct to this end: and, indeed, so does every man, as it were, in spite of himself, consider it: for, when he pursues happiness in violation of this end, he expects and dreads punishment; but, when he pursues this end through inconveniences and dangers, he expects final happiness as his reward. And in both cases his expectation cannot fail him, because it is solidly founded on the justice of God and the nature of things.

(22) Several heathen writers maintain or allow the promiscuous distribution of good and evil to be an objection against a divine providence.

— — — *Sunt nobis nulla profecto  
Numina, cum cæco rapiantur singula casu:  
Mentimur regnare Jovem.* LUCAN. lib. 7.



*Res humanas ordine nullo**Fortuna regit, spargitque manu**Munera caeca, pejora fovens, &c.*SENEC. *Hippol.* Act. III.

But, if we reason rightly, this promiscuous distribution is rather an argument for a divine providence: upon any other supposition, it must appear to be more unaccountable and preposterous. If we assume any atheistical scheme, and suppose the world to be the effect of eternal self-existent principles, acting among themselves by either chance, fate, or design, we must, on any of these three suppositions, find it very hard to account for that phenomenon: for, on any of the three, it should seem that things could not be as they are. As the principles are supposed to act solely of themselves, it should seem, that, wherever they should concur to form an excellence of one sort, they would equally form an excellence of every other, moral and natural, personal and circumstantial: and, on the contrary, that, wherever they should leave a defect of one sort, they would equally leave a defect of every other: and so good and evil would be less mixed than they are. But, be this as it may, supposing a divine providence, it is rational to think that things should be as they are; viz. that moral and natural good should not always associate; neither moral and natural evil; but that room should be left for their disunion, in order to the better probation of free creatures, and that virtue and vice may be more eminently rewarded or punished in a future state; a state which the promiscuous distribution of good and evil, under a divine providence, in this life, necessarily implies. We ought not to consider the inequalities and improprieties in the fortunes of men as particularly predestinated, or especially directed by the will of God: the notion is repugnant to reason and the nature of things: it takes away free-agency from us, in regard to making each other's condition better or worse. The different fortunes of men are, in general, *permitted*, and not *ordained*. It is indeed certain, that the Almighty oversees, controuls, and interposes, at his pleasure; and brings to pass, by his special direction, many events, seemingly casual or moral: but still, it is also as certain, that he leaves men and other moral beings much to their own management; even so far as the faculties he has given them and the trial he intends them do require. Hence it follows, that the different conditions of men are properly to be ascribed to men and to other moral agents, in many respects, rather than to God.



END OF THE NOTES TO BOOK I.